

# Our Class Eggs



Last month, when Mr. Schultz announced, "Today, we are beginning a new science unit," my entire class let out a collective moan. With his usual cheerful nature, Mr. Schultz directed our attention to a lump, covered by a blanket, on the back table. He snatched the blanket off the lump to reveal a strange-looking box. "This," he said, "is an incubator. It is going to allow us to hatch baby chicks!" Our moan turned into an excited **gasp**.

Mr. Schultz said we had a lot to learn before we were ready to get our eggs. He passed out science journals. Our first task was to make a "Know, Want to

Know, and Learned," or KWL, chart about eggs. We quickly listed facts we knew. There were a lot! There were many questions we added to the second column. They included: Can eggs from the grocery store hatch? How long does it take for a chicken to hatch from an egg? How do the baby chicks get out of the eggs? Mr. Schultz said we would learn the answers to all of our questions. We would also add more questions.

Mr. Schultz explained that he knew someone who raised chickens. When the time was right, we would get six eggs from him. Mr. Schultz showed us a **diagram** showing what is inside of an egg. We also learned that the eggs you buy at the grocery store are not fertilized. They do not have baby chicks inside, so they cannot hatch.

When I got to school Wednesday morning, there was a buzz at the back table. My friends were gathered around the incubator. Inside were six eggs! When the bell rang, Mr. Schultz said, "Our eggs are here! They need a lot of care.

Mother hens sit on the eggs to keep them warm. The hens only leave for about fifteen minutes at a time. If the eggs do not stay warm, the chicks will not hatch. The incubator has to stay at 100 degrees Fahrenheit to keep the eggs warm."

Next, Mr. Schultz explained that the eggs had to be turned three times a day—even on the weekends! We will take turns turning the eggs, checking the temperature, and recording the data in the logbook. Who would like to **volunteer** to do this job today? Twenty hands shot in the air. I wasn't chosen, but I knew I would get a turn.



We brainstormed ways to be sure we turned all the eggs. We came up with the idea to mark an X on one side of each egg and an O on the other. The turner would know he had turned all the eggs when they all showed the same sign on top.

"The eggs are **delicate**," Mr. Schultz emphasized. "No one wants to break the egg or harm the chick inside. It is very important we wash our hands before we touch the egg. To protect ourselves, we have to wash our hands afterwards as well."

"Every day," continued Mr. Schultz, "we'll also **predict** what is happening inside the egg. We will draw what we think the growing chicks look like. Then, we'll check to see if our predictions are right."

"How will we know?" I asked.  
"We can't see inside an egg!"

"Actually, we can," Mr. Schultz responded. He showed us how to shine a flashlight through the egg. It's called candling, and it's really cool!



As the days went on, we rotated the jobs involved with caring for the eggs. On day 18, we stopped turning the eggs. Mr. Schultz explained the chicks needed to get into position for hatching. We continued making predictions, asking questions, and discovering the answers. We knew hatching day would soon be here.

"What if all the eggs don't hatch?" Liam asked.

"That is a very real possibility," Mr. Schultz explained. "Not all eggs hatch. Some chicks do not get what they need to grow, so they don't hatch."

"That's so sad," said Maddie.

We were all quiet for a while as we pondered this new possibility. Since we began caring for the eggs, we never imagined the end result would not be six baby chicks.

The next morning, we discovered three of the chicks had hatched! We were excited, yet disappointed because we wanted to see the chicks get out of their shells. During reading, Maddie exclaimed, "Mr. Schultz, one of the eggs is hatching!" We all gathered around the incubator.



"Look," said Mr. Schultz. "The chick is using its egg tooth to break out of the egg." We watched as the chick struggled to free itself from the egg.

Maddy asked, "Should we help it get out?"

"No," Ray answered. "Remember, we learned they need to get out on their own."

Finally, the chick freed itself from the shell. Mr. Schultz asked, "Does it look the way you predicted?"

The chick didn't look the way I predicted. The chick was not

fluffy. It was wet!



As we observed the newly hatched chick, the fifth egg cracked, and the chick began its journey out. Its struggle lasted until the end of the day. We worried it would not be able to break out of the shell. At last, it did. One egg remained. We all went home hopeful to find all six chicks in the incubator the next day.

Sadly, the next day, the egg was still in the incubator. We waited another day, but it did not hatch. We moved the five chicks to another box where they began to eat and drink. As we watched them grow, we were still sad about the sixth egg. After ten days, the chicks went home with Mr. Schultz. He gave them to his friend who had given us the eggs. Our last assignment for the unit was to finish the KWL chart. We filled the last column with all of our knowledge and with the wisdom that not every egg hatches, even when you really want it to.



# The End